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NEA/PPD FOR ALBERTO FERNANDEZ, ROBIN SMITH AND
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SUBJECT: "SINIORA CRIES." EGYPT MEDIA TRENDS:
AUGUST 8, 2006

¶1. Summary. Lebanese Prime Minister Siniora's emotional speech in Beirut yesterday, and the debate over whether Hezbollah or Israel is the victor of the war continued in television and print commentaries. All papers led with similar stories and headlines, including, "Siniora's Tears"; the "public and official delegation" sent to Beirut to show solidarity with the Lebanese people; and President Mubarak's most recent statements about the crisis in Lebanon. Of interest, opposition press reported on an upcoming new play entitled, "Either Us or Them." End Summary.

¶2. In the headlines and front pages. In unusual harmony, government-owned, opposition and independent papers led with some identical headlines and stories. "Siniora Cries," appeared on many front pages, with accompanying photos, as did lead stories about the dispatching of a "Seventy-member delegation, representing official, political, and popular figures in Egypt," to Beirut today "to show solidarity for the Lebanese government and people." Government-owned papers all quoted President Mubarak's latest statement on the crisis, in particular, his characterization of Israel's actions in Qana as a "massacre by all standards" and the UN's "sluggishness" as "the reason for the deterioration in Lebanon." In keeping with the active public discourse on the "new Middle East", the papers quoted President Mubarak as "rejecting any attempt to impose 'new maps' on the region."

¶3. In the commentaries. The debate over who reigns victorious in the conflict continued on evening television programs and in opposition and independent press. One guest on satellite-broadcast, government-owned, Nile TV's evening program claimed the UN resolution "granted a political victory to Israel... as the Arab countries have no cards to play" while another guest praised Hezbollah for its so-called victory in persuading Arab people that "they can die with honor." A regular columnist in opposition daily, Al-Wafd, asserted that "Jews run the world," indicating a victory over President Bush "who cannot stand against them." A columnist in independent daily, Al-Masry Al-Yom, claimed Israel the "clear loser" as "victory is not measured by the size of destruction... but the political gains." Similarly, a columnist in Nahdet Misr called Israel the "loser" due to its

"inability to achieve any military targets." Of note, a regular columnist in leading government-owned daily, Al-Ahram, alluded to a losing position for the Arab countries given "the grave need for reform in the Arab World... (due to) the connection between freedom and democracy and the ability to stop the aggression on the Arab nation only after gaining international respect."

¶4. Public sentiment. Prime Minister Siniora's tearful speech was replayed many times yesterday and today, with evening talk-shows reflecting the public emotion this image evoked. In just one example, the hosts of popular (and competing) satellite and terrestrial evening television programs, Dream TV's "10 pm" and Egyptian Television's, "Your Home" both aired the footage, and called for "positive and decisive Arab reactions to help Lebanon in this time of crisis." In another reflection of the public mood, political events find their way to the art world. According to opposition daily, Al-Wafd, today marked the beginning of rehearsals for, "Either Us or Them," a new musical play tackling "the Arab-Israeli conflict and the American imperialistic vision of the Middle East." The famous Egyptian belly-dancer, Lucy, and well-known actor, Ahmed Rateb, reportedly will star in the play.

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